

DIJ Forum



In its series of public lectures, the German Institute for Japanese Studies will present on

Monday, January 16th 2005, 18.30 h

Katsuyuki YAKUSHIJI

Foreign Policy and Nationalism in Contemporary Japan

While Prime Minister Koizumi was partly successful in reforming the Japanese economic system and the organization of the LDP, his foreign policy put diplomatic relations with China and South Korea at great risk. In particular, his visits to Yasukuni Shrine were criticized as both a means to glorify the Asia-Pacific War and as symbolic acts to justify Japanese invasion and colonization in Asia. Mr. Koizumi's insistence in this matter and the ensuing refusals of both Chinese and Korean heads of government to meet with him, point to the seriousness of the situation and the danger of Japan becoming increasingly isolated in North-East Asia.

In my lecture, I argue that the Japanese public needs to acknowledge this development as a home-made historical problem. Still, many Japanese don't agree with the claims made by China and South Korea, but instead harshly criticize both countries. Many weekly magazines and TV wide-shows stir nationalist feelings and there is virtually a flood of emotional articles in which the neighbouring countries are strongly rebuked. In addition, politicians cater to these spreading nationalist tendencies. In order to see a real change in Japanese public opinion, I would maintain that sufficient education on Japanese war-time history in Asia is indispensable. In my paper, I explore the historical and political background of these phenomena and suggest some ways to deal with foreign policy and nationalism in contemporary Japan.

Katsuyuki YAKUSHIJI is Chief Editor of the monthly magazine *RONZA (Asahi Shinbun)*. A graduate from Tokyo University, he has been lecturing at Waseda University, Osaka University, Denki-Tsūshin University and was a Visiting Fellow at the Henry L. Stimson Center (Washington DC). His major books and articles include *Gaimushō* ("The Ministry of Foreign Affairs", Iwanami 2003), "Jimintō wa kyokū seitō ni naru no desuka" ("Is the LDP turning into a party of the extreme right?", *Sekai*, Oct. 2004) and "Nihon seiji wa yomigaeruka?" ("Will Japanese politics revive again?", *Sekai*, Oct. 2003).

The lecture will be given in English. It will take place on Monday, January 16th 2005 at 6.30 p.m. at the DIJ. Admission is free, space is limited, so please register with Ms. Dinkel at the DIJ.